

network and environmental sampling of wild viruses in the context of polio eradication was also discussed.

2. Measles

It was noted that measles remains a major cause of childhood mortality, although immunization coverage levels have increased worldwide. Children living in poor urban environment were a high risk group and needed special attention. Other high-risk groups were children in low coverage areas, hospitalized children and refugee camps. Case fatality rates could be reduced by early treatment of post-measles complications.

Studies on strategies using a two dose measles schedule to cover older children in many industrialised countries was presented. It was noted, however, that further research was needed to evaluate the optimum strategy in a given epidemiological situation.

The Conference took note of the safety of measles vaccine. Eradication of measles was recognised a possibility, although note was taken of the immense problems associated with this goal.

Drop-outs among Tribal Students

945. SHRIBHAGEY GOBARDHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for continuing high rate of drop-outs of tribal students at primary and secondary school levels vis-a-vis others;

(b) The measures taken by the Government to reduce the rate of drop-outs; and

(c) the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN

SINGH): (a) Drop-out rates can be traced to socio-economic factors such as:

- Children being required to work to supplement the family income or otherwise assist their parents;
- Girls having to attend house hold chores and looking after the siblings;
- Schools having inadequate facilities and insufficient instructional material;
- Reluctance of parents to send their wards to schools.

(b) Some of the measures taken to reduce drop-out rates are:

- Provision of incentives such as scholarships, uniforms, textbooks, attendance scholarships to girls, provision of mid-day meals, hostel facilities, etc.;
- Improvement of facilities in primary schools under the scheme of Operation Blackboard;
- Programmes of non-formal education for those who cannot attend whole day schools;
- Opening of new schools in SC/ST localities.

(c) As a result of these measures their drop-out rate is gradually declining.

Incentive for Family Planning Programmes

946. SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY: SHRI G. M.C. BALAYOGI:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state: